

## Interviewing Basics

Does the thought of going on a job interview send knots to your stomach? You're not alone! Don't worry. Anyone can learn to interview well.

### Outline

- ❶ Before the interview
- ❷ During the interview
- ❸ After the interview

In the interview, you want to present yourself as a person who is ready, able, and willing to get the job done. Your interpersonal skills—how you get along with others—are more important than your background, experience, or education. Think of an interview as an opportunity to show your interpersonal skills. Following are some strategies to effective interviewing!

### ❶ Before the Interview

The single most important thing to do before an interview is practice! Most people don't actually think in complete sentences, so it helps to say your answers out loud until you get your message right. Practice will also give you confidence that you can do this! Remember, though, your butterflies may not go away entirely—just take them with you and do the best you can.

- Find out as much as you can about ADOT—browse our website, for example.
- Think about the job—what will you be expected to do?  
What problems might occur? How can you help solve them?  
If you were doing the hiring, what skills, knowledge, and attitudes, would you be looking for?
- Think about your past experience:  
What have you done that is similar to this job? What results did you achieve?  
How did you handle problems?
- Read the section, “Frequently Asked Questions” and develop answers for them. Practice your answers out loud or with a friend. You don't need to memorize, but you do want your answers to be logical and concise.
- Develop questions you will ask. Questions show you're interested.
- Dress professionally. Some areas in ADOT have a “casual” dress code, but dress one step above that for the interview. For example, wear dress slacks or a pantsuit. In some offices, people wear business attire. If you aren't sure, a

suit or dress is always safe. Expensive clothes aren't necessary, but wear clothes that are neat and fit well.

- Arrive a few minutes before the interview is scheduled to begin. This gives you time to review your notes and relax.

## ② During the Interview

At ADOT, a panel of people may interview you. This practice is not meant to intimidate you—it is our way of ensuring fairness. Greet everyone with a smile and a firm handshake. Take a deep breath to help you relax. As you are answering a question, look mostly at the person who asked it, but try to glance at other members of the panel while you speak.

- Most people don't talk enough during an interview—give complete answers with examples of your skills and accomplishments.
- Express a positive attitude and show enthusiasm in your answers to questions. You don't need a new personality—just speak up and speak clearly.
- Give examples of things you've done and results you've achieved. These personal experiences will provide good information and show confidence that you can do the job.
- Don't apologize for who you are. Interviewing apologetically is a common mistake, made most often by people who feel they're too young, too old, or over- or under-qualified for the job—which covers just about everyone. Just say why you're good and stick to it.
- Don't say maybe. Always sound positive during the interview. Lukewarm words make you sound lukewarm, and make it less likely you'll be hired.
- If you didn't understand a question, ask the interviewer to repeat it.
- Take time to organize your thoughts before you answer a question. A few seconds of silence is much better than rambling.
- Don't say anything negative about a past employer.
- Ask good questions when it's your turn.
- Ask for the job.

## ③ After the Interview

Send a thank you note to the interviewer. You can send a handwritten note, email, or typed letter. This is an opportunity to summarize why you are the right person for the job. Mention the main points discussed in the interview.